



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Elections

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

CERTIFICATION FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS

Program Handbook

North Carolina State Board of Elections Certification for Election Officials

Constantly evolving laws, procedures and technology provide unique challenges as North Carolina's election officials seek to effectively administer lawful and fair elections. The **North Carolina State Board of Elections Certification for Election Officials** program is designed both to provide advanced training and to determine proficiency in election laws and procedures. This program ensures that the County Board of Elections directors, staff, and board members who obtain certification are equipped to execute their elections duties and responsibilities under the law.

The State Board of Elections is the supervisory body of this program and as such administers the program and recommends all rules and decisions necessary to the administration of the certification program.

The State Board of Elections will:

- Oversee the mandatory certification requirement for directors of elections;
- Encourage the pursuit of certification by members of county boards of elections, county board employees, and other individuals with elections responsibilities;
- Ensure that courses leading to certification are available, affordable, useful; and
- Regularly review the program, develop program guidelines, and recommend fundamental changes to members of the State Board of Elections, as necessary.

This Handbook governs the current Certification Program. The Certification Program will be revamped at the end of 2017, at which point the new Certification Handbook will be posted. For any questions, please contact the NCSBE Help Desk at helprequest.sboe@ncsbe.gov.

SCOPE AND OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Certification under this program is mandatory for directors of elections appointed on or after May 1, 1995 [NCGS §163-82.24(b), NCGS §163-35(e)].

Certification is recommended, but not required, of the following:

- Full-time, salaried employees of county boards of elections;
- Permanent part-time employees of county boards of elections;
- Members of county and municipal boards of elections;
- Other persons with elections responsibilities (requires State Board of Elections approval).

To be eligible for certification, a candidate must:

1. Have served three (3) years in their assigned capacity, one (1) of which years must have included a presidential election*;
2. Have attended the requisite number of conferences, seminars and workshops in the preceding three (3) years;
 - Directors & CBE Employees: a minimum of either five (5) conferences, seminars and workshops or two (2) NCSBE Annual Conferences
 - Board Members and other eligible persons: a minimum of three (3) training seminars sponsored by the State Board of Elections

3. Have completed the requisite number of courses assigned to their designation; and
 - Directors & CBE Employees: at least eight (8) Core Courses (Directors of Elections *must complete* Courses #2-6) and at least two (2) elective courses
 - Board Members and other eligible persons: at least five (5) Core Courses (Board Members *must complete* Course #3, Course #5 and Course #8)
4. Have passed an examination administered by the State Board of Elections.

**The State Board of Elections shall consider, on a case-by-case basis, comparable service requirement for certification for any other person with elections responsibilities whose participation has been approved by the State Board of Elections.*

Courses designed for directors and staff focus primarily on elections administration. Completion of the Director/Staff program requirements earns the title ***Certified North Carolina Elections Administrator***.

Courses designed for board members focus primarily on executing statutory authority. Completion of the Board Member program requirements earns the title ***Certified North Carolina Elections Official***.

Certified North Carolina Elections Administrators or Certified North Carolina Elections Officials shall, upon approval by the State Board of Elections, receive an appropriate certificate signed by the Chairman of the State Board of Elections and by the Executive Director of the State Board of Elections.

The initial certification designation is valid for a period of two years beginning on the January 1 or July 1 following approval by the State Board of Elections and ending on December 31 or June 30 of the appropriate year. To extend their certification, an applicant must complete the recertification process.

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

The certification examination is to be administered at least once a year in a proctored setting, and must be taken in person. Locations for the examination will be selected by the NCSBE.

Eligible applicants will be notified of the date, time and tentative location of the examination. Applicants will have one week from the date of the notification to notify the NCSBE of their intent to participate in the examination. Any person who notifies the NCSBE after the one week deadline may not be allowed to sit for the examination. Three weeks prior to the certification exam date, applicants sitting for the examination will be notified of the final details regarding date, time and location(s) of the examination.

Examinations will be scored in a timely manner. The results will be provided to the applicants. Those applicants who wish to discuss their individual examination score must make an appointment with State Board of Elections staff who will then go over the exam in a closed, private setting with the applicant.

To pass, Directors and CBE staff must receive a score of 75 out of a possible 100 points; Board Members and other eligible persons must receive a score of 70 out of a possible 100 points. An applicant with a score less than passing will be given an opportunity for discussion and counseling with State Board of Elections staff and will be able to retake the examination on the next scheduled date.

RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Certification must be renewed every two years and all requirements for renewal must be completed during the two-year recertification period. A reexamination is not required, unless deemed necessary by the Executive Director. If requirements are not completed, certification will lapse.

A Director of Elections or an elections board employee who has been designated as a *Certified North Carolina Election Administrator* must accumulate sixteen (16) credits during the two-year recertification period.

An Elections Board member or other approved person who has been designated as a *Certified North Carolina Election Official* must accumulate eight (8) credits during the two-year recertification period.

In the event any certified elections administrator or certified elections official fails to meet the continuing education requirements by the end of a two-year certification period, that person's certification shall lapse.

The State Board of Elections may recertify the official upon successful completion of the initial certification program.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Note: *Records Management procedures are currently being transferred to the LMS system, at which point the procedures below will be instated. The transfer is expected to be completed by late Spring 2017. The NCSBE will notify the CBE's when the transfer is complete and the records are up-to-date, at which point participants should verify that their LMS record is accurate and complete.*

In order to receive credit for attending a Conference, Seminar or Workshop, the applicant must:

1. Register on LMS prior to the event, thereby indicating intent to apply for credit
2. Sign a sign-in sheet at the event, thereby verifying participation

The NCSBE will be responsible for the sign-in sheets prepared for any NCSBE-sponsored event. For events not sponsored by the NCSBE, it is the applicant's responsibility to procure a sign-in sheet with the applicant's signature from the sponsoring organization and provide it to the NCSBE in a timely manner. Sign-in sheets will be kept at the State Board of Elections for at least 12 months following the event.

NCSBE staff will enter all credits into LMS after receiving sign-in sheets, which is designed for tracking each applicant's progress in the certification program. The NCSBE will update applicants on their process regularly. It is the responsibility of each applicant to maintain a record of all conferences, seminars, workshops and courses for which certification credit is given and to notify the State Board of Elections of any discrepancies in the documentation in order to ensure accuracy.

CREDIT VALUES FOR CORE COURSES AND ELECTIVE COURSES

Every Core Course will be no less than one day and will be assigned 3 credit values each. Two (2) years or more of service as a precinct official counts as one (1) core course.

The Core Courses are as follows:

- Course #1: Absentee and Alternative Voting
- Course #2: Ballot Preparation; Notice of Candidacy; Voting Equipment
- Course #3: Budget Management
- Course #4: Campaign Financing Reporting
- Course #5: Duties and responsibilities of Board Members, Directors, and Staff
- Course #6: Education and Training of Precinct Officials; Election Day Activity
- Course #7: Election laws outside G.S. §163; Municipal Elections
- Course #8: Public relations
- Course #9: Voter registration
- Course #10: Computer Applications
- Course #11: Residency Issues; Challenges/Hearings

- Course #12: Candidate Filing
- Course #13: Maintaining Administrative Compliance (How to Prepare for a Wellness Check)

Elective Courses include:

- Additional core courses beyond the requirement; including
 - Auditing Records
 - Basics of Election Law
 - Elections Management 101
 - Mapping and Records Management
 - Municipal Law
 - Overview of an Election
 - Public Relations
 - Recent Developments in Election Law and Legislative Trends
- Notary Public class;
- College, university, community college and technical institute courses on the following topics, subject to State Board of Elections approval with a minimum grade of 70%.
 - Business administration
 - Communications
 - Computer science
 - Fiscal management
 - Personnel management
 - Political science or public administration
 - Public relations
 - Records management
 - Foreign language

CREDIT VALUES FOR CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Credit values for training seminars will be assigned in accordance with the following table.

Conferences	Credit Value
North Carolina State Board of Elections (NCSBE) Annual Conference	2
North Carolina Association of Directors of Elections (NCADE) Statewide meeting	1
North Carolina Elections Conference (NCEC) Statewide meeting	1
Board Members Associations Statewide meeting	1
NCADE, NCEC or Board Members Association District meeting	1
Seminars and Workshops	Credit Value
NCADE or NCEC Educational workshops	1
National elections organizations educational workshops	1 / day
Election Center or Federal Election Commission Courses	1 / day
IACREOT Courses	1 / day
Other national organization courses, upon approval of the NCSBE	1 / day
College, university, community college or technical institute courses relevant to the elections field/duties	4
County-sponsored training activities of at least a half-day duration, upon approval of the Certification Board	1
Training at State Board of Elections offices	1 / day
UNC Institute of Government annual Winter Elections Conference	3
UNC Institute of Government County Administrator Course	4
Other activities approved by the State Board of Elections	As set by Board